

Atlantic Coast Conference Football Kickoff

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Jim Phillips

Commissioner Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: It's my pleasure to introduce Atlantic Coast Conference Commissioner Jim Phillips.

JIM PHILLIPS: Good morning, and welcome to this year's ACC Football Kickoff. It's terrific to be back together as we look ahead with great anticipation to the upcoming ACC football season. Thank you for making the effort to come to Charlotte and taking an interest in our outstanding football student-athletes and coaches.

It's been a pleasure getting to know you over the last 18 months, and I'm grateful for our ongoing relationships. The entire ACC family and those associated with this tremendous league have been so wonderful to me, Laura, and our five children. I'm fired up that Laura is here, our oldest Luke is here, and our youngest. The engine of the train and the caboose are both with us. Luke and James, great to have you here with me and everyone else in attendance.

In the days ahead, I look forward to spending time with you. As much as we can talk about ACC Football, I'm ready. It remains my belief there is no better conference in the country. When you combine our incredible student-athletes, world-class institutions, broad-based sports offerings, and our commitment to maximizing the educational and athletic opportunities for students.

The leadership at our 15 schools remains second to none, and I would like to thank the ACC Board of Directors led by Duke president Vince Price, the athletic directors, faculty athletic reps and senior women's administrators who continue to build upon the ACC's long history of balancing academics, athletics, and integrity at the highest levels.

In a few minutes we'll look ahead to the upcoming football season, and I'll make sure to address some of the topics in the news recently. Right now, though, let's look back at the phenomenal year it was for the ACC.

No other conference won more NCAA National Championships than the ACC. The league's seven titles match the conference's record in an academic year.

Additionally, ACC student-athletes won 20 NCAA individual titles. Beyond the seven team championships, eight additional ACC championships competed in the national semifinals, two for a national championship, and three teams had to face another league team in either the semifinals or finals.

Over the entire academic year 12 of our schools captured either an ACC or NCAA title, and 11 programs finished ranked either first or second in the country in their respective sports. Academically the ACC continues to lead the country. For the 15th consecutive year the league has led the way among all football bowl subdivision conferences in best colleges rankings by U.S. News and World Report with three schools ranking in the top 25 and seven in the top 40.

In December the NCAA released its annual graduation success rates, which also demonstrated the ACC's collective high level of academic success. Beyond the competitions and classrooms, the league's ongoing work in racial and social justice, health and safety, and professional development continued to shine.

In September our league announced the inaugural ACC Unite Award, which will be presented annually and was created to honor individuals affiliated with the league who have made an impact in the areas of racial and social justice.

An initiative of our Committee for Racial and Social Justice, which we affectionately call CORE, the inaugural recipients included the first male and female athletes of color to integrate the athletic teams at each of our 15 institutions.

The league's commitment was also highlighted during the second annual fall, winter, and spring Unity Weeks, which provides a meaningful way for the conference to highlight our collective commitment as part of CORE's mission. Culminating the CORE initiatives for the year was a truly transformational and educational experience that took place this past weekend. More than 45 ACC student-athletes, administrators, and conference office staff took part in a journey to two of the centers of the civil rights movement in Selma and Montgomery, Alabama.

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This amazing experience was highlighted by a march across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, site of the 1965 Bloody Sunday attack. It's hard to describe the powerful emotions felt throughout the entire weekend. To be certain it was a humbling experience and career highlight to receive a key to the city from mayor of Selma James Perkins. It was most comforting to me, though, to be surrounded by our younger generation who was committed and energized to carry on the necessary work in pursuit of true equality.

This past May the ACC Health and Safety Summit was held in partnership with the ACC Sports Medicine Association, bringing together our campus professionals to collaborate and share best practices. It was an outstanding event that not only benefited the attendees, but more importantly, will have a positive impact on our 10,000 student-athletes.

To further raise awareness of mental health and wellness, we used a series of 28 men's and women's basketball games as part of the 2021 ACC-Big Ten Challenge to amplify the importance of mental health and to help break down stigmas related to it. Additionally, the ACC provided access to the Calm meditation app for every student-athlete and coach and administration in the league.

The ACC's responsibility to enhance the overall development of our student-athletes and coaches was evident through a series of programs this year. In December the first cohort of coaching the whole athlete academy was completed. The eight-week virtual immersive development program established by our office equips coaches with tools to better support the modern day student-athlete.

The ACC's Professional Development Academy finished up a few weeks ago and featured student-athletes coming together as a part of a four-week program. The Academy's curriculum designed and delivered by league administrators assisted participants in establishing and refining skills for long-term success in their lives.

As you can surmise, there is no greater priority than the success and development of these brilliant student-athletes. We remain committed to our mission of providing the highest quality experiences and opportunities for them as well as for our coaches and staff.

As everyone is aware, student-athletes have rightfully been able to earn money related to their name, image, and likeness over the past year. It has provided some outstanding opportunities that we all celebrate. However, the lack of a single enforceable standard for NIL across the schools and all states has created an environment where

inducements inaccurately labeled as NIL are disrupting recruiting.

Fair regulation of recruiting is essential for fair competition. We all know NIL has upended recruiting, a result no one desired when it came into effect last July. How did it happen? NIL rules differ from state to state. Regulation is nonexistent. Enforcement of the rules is incredibly challenging.

The ACC student-athletes that make up our Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, who are here in the room today, continue to engage with members of Congress on finding a regulatory solution that is national in scope and fair while still allowing for outstanding opportunities.

I would like our SAAC group to stand up and be recognized this morning if you will, please.

(Applause).

As state legislators continue to seek recruiting advantages and as legal challenges continue to chill the enforcement of rules, only Congress can provide consistent standards and the appropriate protection to implement what is ultimately passed.

As you all know, June 23rd marked the golden anniversary of Title IX, and there's no question the historic legislation has positively impacted the lives of women and provided a pathway in their continued support of achieving gender equity in college athletics.

We are proud to recognize and celebrate Title IX during the upcoming year and understanding that we have an ongoing responsibility to continue to further fairness and equity for women.

For Laura and I, our daughter Meredith, a current college soccer student-athlete, is a true beneficiary of this historic law. I think a lot of you know my background, being raised one of ten children, I had six older sisters that never had the opportunity that our young women have a chance now.

As a conference we are one year away from sponsoring 28 league sports with the addition of ACC women's gymnastics in '23-'24. Our conference will sponsor 15 women's sports and 13 men's sports.

Among our peer conferences no league will sponsor more sports and perhaps more importantly, we will lead in the number of women's offerings in the ACC.

Broad-based programs and opportunities matter in college sports. As I mentioned earlier, our league continues to be



blessed with tremendous leadership, and for the first time in ACC history, the chairs of the FARs, ADs, SWAs are all females.

In addition, with three females leading their respective athletic departments, the ACC has more female ADs than our peer conferences combined. While we are certainly excited to be leading the way, there is still so much work to be done. Yet, at a time when we are celebrating the gains in women's participation, we are also defending those gains from real or perceived threats in college athletics.

College athletics has faced criticism by some who forget that we field teams beyond football and men's basketball. College athletics happens within the context of higher education on campuses that pride themselves on diverse offerings academically and in extracurriculars. Those who clamor for a pay-for-play system alone disregard the collegiate principles of diverse offerings.

For decades we have relied on the financial power of two sports that generate revenue to fund themselves as well as other sports, commonly referred to as the Olympic sports.

Many of those Olympic sports student-athletes' only path to colleges is through sport. Yet, they leave enriched for life. Our nation relies on these sports to fulfill spots on Team USA, which had nearly 80% current and former collegians on its last Summer Olympics roster. What happens to those gains from Title IX if Olympic sports cannot be supported? What happens to the Olympic movement that makes us all proud if those on-campus opportunities disappear? These are hard questions that must be considered as college athletics continues to change and evolve.

College athletics is not perfect. It should and will be improved, but there has never been a better time to be a student-athlete than right now. Having two in our own home, I think Laura and I see that firsthand.

The future is bright, but we need to be diligent and stay focused as we address the threats to what is the sporting envy of the world, the uniquely American combination of academic and athletic development that is college sports.

True NIL opportunities, universal support services related to academics, medical care, mental health, career development outside of sport and the best coaches' facilities for their athletic development.

Fundamentally we are all responsible for the greater good of the enterprise. Let me repeat that. We are all responsible for the greater good of the enterprise. 500,000 student-athletes. College athletics lives at a three-way

intersection of competition, education, and entertainment, and all three must exist in a balanced way.

Education matters. Winning matters. Resources matter. The ecosystem is not dissimilar to our respective neighborhoods that we live in. Keeping them healthy and diverse is a priority. There will always be a variety of communities: gated, upper class, middle class, or more modest.

In times of great change, and that's a fair description of the last 25, 15, 10 years and really the last 12 months. Any new structure in the NCAA must serve many, not a select few. This includes national governance, media rights, membership, NCAA, CFP access. The list goes on and on.

We are not the professional ranks. This is not the NFL or NBA Light. We all remain competitive with one another, but this is not and should not be a winner-take-all or a zero-sum structure. College athletics has never been elitist or singularly commercial. It's provided countless individuals with a path to higher education and, therefore, life-changing possibilities, access, opportunity at a modern rules-based structure, should all remain a priority as we continue to evolve.

I will continue to do what's in the best interest of the ACC, but will also strongly advocate for college athletics to be a healthy neighborhood, not a two or three gated communities.

Resources may be different, but access, education, and competitive opportunity will remain the foundation going forward.

From 1975 to 1985 the NCAA men's basketball tournament grew both financially and in popularity as it moved from 32 to 64 teams. This resulted in an event that continues to be embraced by college fans, media, student-athletes and coaches. We must acknowledge this is a recipe and lesson college football may want to learn from, but do it in a way that is safe for those who play that sport. Access to championships is essential for all neighborhoods. We should keep this in mind as we try to balance education, competition, and entertainment in today's disruptive environment.

As for ACC football, the reason nearly 700 of us have gathered, we welcome four new coaches into the league. Duke's Mike Elko, Miami's Mario Cristobal, Virginia's Tony Elliott and Virginia Tech's Brent Pry. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know each of them, and they are a terrific additions to our outstanding group of coaches.



As of today, we're only five weeks away, nearly five weeks away from kickoff. Week zero kicks off for the ACC on August 27th, and from the 27th through Monday, September 5th, ACC football programs will play 14 games in ten days, including 12 games over five straight days beginning Thursday, September 1st through Labor Day. It will be quite a weekend for our conference, and I'm going to try to make every one of those games.

The ACC's nonconference football scheduling continues to be the strongest in the country with our teams playing 21 games against Power Five opponents, eight nonconference games against teams ranked in the final 2021 Associated Press Top 20 poll, and all 14 teams will play one Power Five nonconference opponent with seven of our schools playing two. There's no shortage of exciting games this season, and we appreciate our amazing television partners providing national platforms for our fans.

Speaking of television partners, we were thrilled in December to celebrate full distribution making ACC Network available to nearly 90 million households. It was something we talked about right in this room last year, which was a real big concern for us.

It was a milestone moment in the short history of the ACCN, and we appreciate the ongoing leadership at Disney, ESPN, and ACCN. Especially Jimmy Pitaro and Burke Magnus.

In partnership with the ACC Network there continues to be a priority to increase football programming year-round. ACCN made its first-ever road trip last August visiting each football program on their respective campuses, resulting in 14 prime time shows featuring interviews, behind the scenes footage, tour the facilities, and more. In a few weeks ACCN will embark on this year's road trip delivering even more access to our schools and amazing student-athletes and coaches.

ACCN's premiere football program "The Huddle" took to the road last year to subway ACC championship game and at the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl down in Atlanta. This year we are pleased to announce the ACC Huddle will be back on the road during the 2022 season. They will begin in week zero in Chapel Hill, week two in Blacksburg with several other additional stops around in the weeks and months ahead in the football season.

During the offseason ACC Network added significant football content, including a two-hour prime time show to unveil the 2022 football schedule, the addition of all 14 spring games for the first time, and exclusive coverage of both signing days and our pro days. All firsts. We are thrilled these initiatives will be ongoing and enhanced this

year.

In addition to the already celebrated priorities and successes, ACCN will launch a new afternoon show that will air week days. "ACC P.M." hosted by Mark Packer, who is going to be coming out of the witness protection program since he last aired at the end of June, will debut from 4:00 to 7:00 on Monday, August 22nd. The show will have a football focus and deliver news and commentary from across the conference on a variety of areas.

The ACC continues to work to enhance, elevate, and best position ACC football for the long-term, and we have made progress in a number of areas. We appreciate deeply the tremendous work of our head football coaches, athletic directors who give freely of their time to collaborate on football-specific matters. Those are two new groups that we started last year.

Between the joint AD-head football coach subcommittee and our football officiating subcommittee, we are constantly in connection with our programs and provided with tremendous insights.

On the national level the ACC has been significantly involved in changes that have been made, including deregulation of conference's football championship games, starting preseason camp earlier without adding practices to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of our football student-athletes, adjustments to the signing limit and initial counters to give our coaches more flexibility in filling a complete roster of 85 scholarships, and as was announced this spring, Pitt AD, Heather Lyke has been named the chair of the NCAA Football Oversight Committee, furthering the league's national leadership position.

There's also been ongoing and meaningful work and dialogue among ACC head football coaches, ADs, compliant directors and probably most important, team physicians regarding a 365-day college football calendar that was shared with all finish FBS conferences at Notre Dame earlier this year.

We appreciate the conversation that continued to take place among our peers as we gather feedback to further refine the proposal and ultimately, come together across all ten FBS conferences and Notre Dame to find the right model that best positions college football at the FBS level.

We look forward to the ACC football season culminating here in Charlotte with the 2022 Subway ACC Football Championship game. For a final time under the current scheduling model, the champions of the Atlantic and Coastal divisions will meet on the first Saturday in December at Bank of America Stadium, and we remain



extremely appreciative of our relationship with the Charlotte Sports Foundation and the Carolina Panthers.

Following our championship game weekend, we will continue to celebrate postseason with our 11 remarkable bowls that are here with us today. The Capital One Orange Bowl anchors our partnerships, and we are so proud of the memorable experiences bowls provide. College football bowls and bowl season matters to the ACC and the health and future of college football.

Before providing some final comments related to the national landscape, let me highlight our recently announced ACC football scheduling model that begins next season and runs through 2026.

The new model will include each team playing three primary opponents every year while facing the other ten league teams twice during the four-year cycle. Once at home, once on the road. This will eliminate the Atlantic and Coastal divisions. I know some of you are very sad about that. With the top two teams now based on conference winning percentage competing in the Subway ACC Football Championship game. Overall, the future scheduling model provides significant enhancements for our schools and conference, but the most important being for our student-athletes having the opportunity to play every school, both home and away, over a four-year period.

In closing, let me briefly address a few other topics: The ACC continues to be supportive of an expanded college football playoff. As you know, the ACC took what we believe was a necessary stance regarding last fall's CFP proposal. This was based on what we feel we must all come together to address before rushing into a new model. The implementation of a 365-day calendar, health and safety, and several other items that you know well.

Engagement is ongoing with our schools, and my fellow commissioners to chart a path forward prior to the expiration of the current CFP contract in 2026. We had two great meetings in April and in June, and I'm confident that our concerns and others' concerns will be addressed and a new model with greater access will ultimately come to pass.

We will do our part in the ACC to make it happen, but there's some more work to be done. It's been an honor to serve as a member of both the NCAA Constitution and Transformation Committees. Following the Constitution Committee's work from last August through January, the Transformation Committee then began its diligent work. We are in the process of examining many aspects of Division I college athletics from championships to the role

of the NCAA, from the infraction process to membership criteria.

As you know, the committee has already made public several recommendations, and we expect more in the months ahead that could significantly change what we do and how we do it. This includes prioritizing the areas that involve the enhancement of the student-athlete experience, streamlining the NCAA rule book, modernizing transfer rules, and implementing a timelier process in dealing with infractions cases.

It's a privilege to serve alongside NC State chancellor Randy Woodson on the Transformation Committee, and I'm proud that the ACC has a seat at the table in helping shape what comes next.

Of course the recent announcement of two PAC-12 schools' pending move to the Big Ten in 2024 set off a flurry of conversations both inside and outside of our league. While I won't go into details of those conversations, I will tell you that while the ACC is strong, we are continually evaluating all options that could further strengthen our conference, and we are engaged in ongoing dialogue with our media partners.

There's been a lot of rumors and speculation the last few weeks, and I understand we all want answers and certainty. With that said, these decisions will impact our member institutions and student-athletes for years to come, and all options, all options, must be carefully evaluated.

But today is all about ACC football, and I cannot wait for you to meet and speak with our outstanding schools, coaches, and student-athletes. We have an exciting season ahead, as I have stated this morning, and I just want to, again, thank you for your interest in the ACC and for your giving up some of your summer to be here in Charlotte.

With that, I'll be happy to take some questions.

Q. Jim, I'll follow up with your last comments. How confident are you in the ACC's place right now in this landscape when you make comments about a two- or three-gated neighborhood, considering where the revenue gaps will continue to grow and where the ACC is right now?

JIM PHILLIPS: I want to maybe level-set it. The last 20 minutes I think you got a sprinkling about where the ACC is nationally. All metrics, we are one of the leaders in the country in all of those areas I talked about, except the revenue piece of it, and that's been brought to light with the



recent move of USC and UCLA to the Big Ten.

A year ago we were talking about the same thing, and so truly over the last 18 months it's been my primary focus. We were able to get distribution done. We have some other things coming forward relative to what we're going to do in partnership with some revenue consultants that I'm really excited about being able to release that maybe by the end of the month.

We're looking at our TV contract. We're in engagement daily -- almost daily with our partners at ESPN. I openly talk about ESPN because we are 50/50 partners on our network, and so they're motivated, we're motivated. We've come together to have some discussions about what would be the next iteration for the ACC. It doesn't mean we're going to make a move. It doesn't mean we're not going to make a move, but all options are on the table.

Revenue is certainly one piece and a really big piece as we move forward, but I will say it again, we need all communities healthy. When you think about where we're at right now, we're probably in the gated community as one of five. Maybe people have a different line of demarcation about who is in there. It really doesn't take away from. We're going to continue to try to find new ways to generate revenue for our conference.

Q. Just wanted to backtrack a little bit on the CFP stuff. You had said initially there was basically too much going on in the NCAA world, the world of college sports to consider that proposal. With the change in leadership eventually at the top of the NCAA, are you prepared to sort of disconnect those things now and pursue CFP expansion unrelated to sort of the transformation, because it seems like those things are going to move on different timetables?

JIM PHILLIPS: We're making progress, Luke, with the Transformation Committee. I think you're going to see something at the end of August that's pretty substantial with more work to be done. I think these things are walking along together, Luke, along with a new NCAA president.

I don't expect us in September when we get together to line up and announce a new CFP structure. I think we've made great progress over our last two meetings both in April and in June, and everybody is motivated to come together.

So I don't know that there's a separation now with those things. We'll see, but I think the health and safety, the 365-day calendar review. I mean, we've talked about access, automatic qualifiers. There's a lot of things to discuss, but those things, again, I would tell you I do not think have really separated that much.

Q. Jim, how concerned are you that the growing revenue chasm could turn the Power Five into a Power Two with the Big Ten and the SEC way ahead revenue-wise of the ACC? Is expansion the only real solution to cutting that down?

JIM PHILLIPS: I don't know that it's the only solution. I think you have to look creatively. We've been doing that over the last year. We're going to continue to do that.

All neighborhoods need to be healthy. It's not good for college athletics if we're not, and, again, you heard my reference earlier. We understand where those two leagues are. No one is ignoring that. We're all trying to find ways to close that gap.

So I know where our 17 -- or our 15 schools are. We are really aligned to try to find some solutions to that revenue gap, but it can't be at the expense of all the other things that we're doing. So there's I think a really good plan for us as we move ahead. Again, considering all of are our options. In these kinds of times you have to do that. This is unique what's happened over the last 12 months.

Q. 17 schools?

JIM PHILLIPS: That was an error. 15 schools. Sorry about that. Thinking about your expansion number. (Laughter).

Q. Commissioner, you obviously have been in the midst of a search for a new headquarters. Can you give us an update on that? And also, the North Carolina state legislature included incentive funds that would be dependent on having more championship events in the state of North Carolina. If that's what you end up doing, would you be willing to meet that mandate in order to reach that incentive money?

JIM PHILLIPS: The process has been tremendous. I don't think you can put a timeline. It's such an important decision that you can't put a three-month, six-month, eight-month. We started last summer. It's been 12 months now. Newmark has led us incredibly well. We started with 18, 20 different cities. We have it down to three over two states.

These things take a life of their own when you start to deal with state legislators and senators and economic development and mayors. In the end what we're trying to get down to this summer to finish it off is, what are the three proposals to bring forward to the board?

And the announcement by the state of North Carolina,

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awfully generous and awfully generous of Governor Cooper to sign that legislation and pass the budget, will be part of what we present to our 15 presidents for a decision.

We're hopeful to have a decision I would say in the next month or two, but, again, I don't really want to put an artificial timeline on it, because this thing has had the cadence that it's going to take, but I feel tremendous about all that's occurred there.

Q. You spoke about the ACC wanting an expanded college football playoff. Did that have any influence with you going to the 3-5-5 scheduling next year?

JIM PHILLIPS: It did. It had an awful lot -- again, when you talk about an expanded playoff, you'd like to crown your champion in a way that you have the two best teams in your conference playing for that championship game. Prior to the passing of the recent legislation, you had to go into divisions in order to have a championship game.

Now the ability for teams to line up in a singular division for there to be an opportunity to play within that singular division eight games and then we'll crown the champion based on winning percentage. It definitely had impetus for what we did.

Q. I'm curious, the way the alliance kind of dissolved, you've used a lot of terms like "the greater good," "being in the same neighborhood." Do you feel like the other commissioners share your mindset or approach in that regard?

JIM PHILLIPS: I do. I think we all understand we have a deeper responsibility than our own conference. Listen, I'm proud of the work that we did in the alliance. It was the Big Ten's decision to do what they did. That's not for me to judge. They did what they felt was in the best interest of the conference, but we did some really significant things together over the period of 12 months, including legislation that we just talked about earlier in my remarks.

We have to continue to try to come together. Really look forward to working with Brett, new commissioner. I do want to say this, I'm remiss if I didn't spend just a moment thanking about Bowlsby, the commissioner of the Big 12, who has been a great friend and a mentor and somebody that I just think the world of who just announced, obviously, his retirement of maybe six, eight months ago, but officially retires at the last month.

I can say a lot of things about Bob Bowlsby, but Bob Bowlsby made college athletics better and excited for he and Candice and their family to do what they're going to do in the next chapter. I'm looking forward to working with

Brett, just like I do with George, just like I do with Greg and with Kevin and all our FBS commissioners.

Then I think we have a really nice group of 32 commissioners. You're going to have to come together. We're going to have to continue to work together, and I'm optimistic about us being able to do that.

Q. As wild as the last 12 months have been and the unexpected departures of big-time programs to other conferences, how confident are you that you will be able to maintain your current membership of all your schools in the ACC that they will not defect? And also, isn't it important to re-evaluate and potentially try to talk to Notre Dame about joining the conference in football to help strengthen the ACC going forward?

JIM PHILLIPS: I love our 15 schools, and I'm confident in us staying together. That's all I've heard in all the calls that we've had. We want to work together to try to provide more resources to our student-athletes, so we're all on the same page.

I sat here a year ago talking about Notre Dame and whenever I've been asked the question, we continue to remain close with Notre Dame. They know how we feel. They know that we would love to have them as a football member in the conference, but we also and I also respect their independence. Having worked there, having two children there, going to school right now, one a student-athlete, I know what independence means to Notre Dame. So you respect it, and I know that if there comes a time that Notre Dame would consider moving to a conference and away from independence, I feel really good about it being the ACC.

Q. (Off microphone) To go a little further on that, you've been talking about expansion, and you said that everything is on the table, there's all options. So are you having those ongoing conversations with teams across the country, and is this something that you're really heavily looking at in an expansion of memberships, seeing what the Big 12, the Big Ten, and the SEC have already done in the past 12 months?

JIM PHILLIPS: I'm not going to talk about any of the details about who we have or haven't talked about, but we've had lots of really good discussions within the ACC, and I think you have to be thoughtful, you have to be smart, you have to be strategic. Making a move just to make a move doesn't make any sense.

In the end what is the value that ends up coming back to the conference if we were to expand? All of those things have to be under great scrutiny and dialogue and ultimately



some kind of formation of what we think is best.

Q. It has been suggested by some, including some administrators in your own league, that the ACC look at its revenue distribution formula. Are there discussions ongoing about rewarding performance and brand value when it comes to distributing revenue among the league members?

JIM PHILLIPS: David, I would go back to what I said earlier and answered: All options are on the table. When you look at revenue, you look at closing the gap, you look at generating more, you look at distribution, it all is part of a similar conversation.

Q. Commissioner, you mentioned fair regulation of the NIL and it differing from state to state. What are your personal thoughts on a player having his money regulated off his own image and likeness? What are your personal thoughts on it? Can you just elaborate on that, please?

JIM PHILLIPS: I think every administrator in the country believes the ability for student-athletes to monetize their name, image, and likeness, that was a good movement a year ago, but it has rocked our college athletics world. We all have kind of vowed to stay within certain boundaries as it relates to rules and regulations. This is one that doesn't have any right now.

So that's where the bumpiness has come into, and that's where the uneasiness that I certainly feel within our conference and I know other commissioners feel in their conferences. We really, really need some help in Washington. That's a tough place to be.

America has a lot of issues going on right now. I'm not sure that that's a priority for our lawmakers, but I will say we have been engaged with quite a few congressmen and women and senators on both sides of the aisle, and I feel like we're creating at least a little bit of momentum here. We all hope that something can occur over the next six, eight, ten months where there is something adopted that we could all abide by across the college athletics universe.

Q. Just two questions: Based on your confidence that you can keep your current membership together and the conversations you've had with the presidents, does this mean you're also confident the grant of rights will not be challenged, as has been speculated by many over the past couple of weeks? And then, secondly, in the next few years, of course, media rights are coming to an end. There will be negotiations. We've heard a lot about Fox and ESPN. Do you sense another network or networks being

involved in the conversation with the ACC in some way?

JIM PHILLIPS: So I can just go by what history has told us with the grant of rights, including in current times. People talked about Oklahoma and Texas leaving immediately. I think that's pretty well-stated now that that's not the case. They're going to wait until their grants of rights is over.

Listening to UCLA and USC at the end of June, June 30th, and subsequent days after they clearly are going to stay in the PAC-12 until their grant of rights is over.

So you can follow the logic there. I would think that the significance of what that would mean, the television rights that the conference owns as well as a nine-figure financial penalty, I think it holds, but your guess is as good as mine.

As it relates to TV partners, again, I don't want to speculate about what anyone else has done. We have a deep relationship with ESPN, a valuable relationship, and they're the ones that created the network with us. They're the ones we partnered with. I give so much credit to Commissioner Swafford for all of his work. We'll stay close because in the end it has to add value to your conference, and you can define value in different ways. You can define value from an academic standpoint. You can define value about athletic success and competitiveness. Are they an AAU research institution? You can also define it by money and does it have value to your conference? Would it have value to your conference?

That's the same exercise that I think has been going on for college athletics for a long, long time. Hope that answers your question.

Q. Your sincerity in the belief in the collegiate model is obvious. I don't think anyone can question that, but in fairness to you, we are going to be critical of that because it does seem a bit old-fashioned. Do you think this attitude still works in 2022 and that it will still work in the next five to ten years for the ACC as you get lapped financially by the Big Ten and the SEC?

JIM PHILLIPS: We owe it to those kids, Joe. This is no time to be waving a white flag on that. I'm not trying to be Pollyannish about it, because I live in the real world and the real time, just like all of us do, and times change and move, but for us to ignore the affordability and access and opportunity that it provides to young people, I think that would be a huge mistake, huge mistake.

I'm okay with living in different neighborhoods. That's not my point about, you have to be in the gated community. My point is the community is best when all neighborhoods

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

are healthy. All of them. Some will never reach \$25 million or \$30 million in revenue to provide for their athletics department, but that doesn't mean they don't deserve to be a part of it, part of the system, part of championships at times. We're talking about different levels within Division I. We're talking about subdivisions and those types of things in the transformation committee.

If we take that path that it's only going to be about football and basketball, that's shame on all of us. It just is. I understand. I understand the criticism that comes with that, and that's okay. I think it's up for public debate and opinion about what's right. I know, I understand about getting lapped. I do. I get it. I've been in those conferences. I worked in the Big 12 -- or Big Ten for 12 years. I was in the SEC. But I was also in the Mid-American Conference, and I know what those kids did at Northern Illinois. The only thing that was different was the name on the jersey and the colors. They were just as committed to having a great experience as those coaches were just as committed. It was a situation where I left Notre Dame to go to Northern Illinois. I digress a little bit. I had people tell me, why are you leaving Notre Dame to go to Northern Illinois? You're leaving the brightest of all bright lights for a directional school. My first AD job.

I started to question it before I took the job. Did I just make the right move? Three, four, five, six people: Northern Illinois? Where is that? Northern Illinois?

I was on campus for about three hours, and I knew I exactly made the right decision. The neighborhoods look different, but are we going to really try to do what we can to keep the community healthy? That's a question we'll all have to answer.

Q. With regard to the grant of rights, you just referenced UCLA, USC, Oklahoma, and Texas. Due respect, Commissioner, they had two to three years left on the grant of rights. The grant of rights here lasts another 14 years. Do you really anticipate the conference and the university standing pat for that long?

JIM PHILLIPS: Everything is on the table. We understand what that means. We understand what that revenue means moving forward, but I will also say, as I look at the next few years, I like where we're going. But, again, the window is through '36, so we're going to have to address it, no question.

Your point is a good one. Your point is a good one.

THE MODERATOR: That's going to conclude the formal part of today's Commissioner's forum. We're going to flip

this room where are. Our first team will be in here at 10:45. We appreciate all of you joining us today. Thank you.

JIM PHILLIPS: Thanks again. Thanks for being here. Look forward to seeing you over the next couple of days.

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